

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
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FOR EUR/CAN ROUSE

PASS AGRIC FAS/RIESZ

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, CA
SUBJECT: PROPOSALS FOR MEAT IMPORT REGIME

REF: (A) OTTAWA 435; (B) CN7075, 10/28/77

1. AGATT HAS OBTAINED FURTHER DETAILS ON PROPOSAL FOR MEAT IMPORT REGIME AND EXPECTS GAIN ADDITIONAL INSIGHT IN NEXT WEEK OR SO.
2. ON JANUARY 27, AGRICULTURE CANADA (A/C) CIRCULATED CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSION PAPER TO OTHER CONCERNED MINISTRIES. A/C PROPOSAL IS NOT RPT NOT IN THE FORM OF DRAFT LEGISLATION.
3. AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE BY A/C TO HAVE DISCUSSION PAPER PRESENTED TO CABINET THIS WEEK PRESUMABLY TO GAIN CABINET'S APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE. HOWEVER, MATTER WILL NOW BE DISCUSSED INITIALLY AT UPCOMING INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEETING.

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4. THE A/C PAPER SETS FORTH TWO OPTIONS. THE FIRST IS TO CONTINUE TO HANDLE MEAT IMPORTS UNDER THE IMPORT/EXPORT CONTROL ACT WHICH IS ADMINISTERED BY INDUSTRY, TRADE AND COMMERCE (IT&C). THE SECOND OPTION PROPOSES A BROAD PROGRAM AND WOULD PROBABLY REQUIRE NEW LEGISLATION. AS BEST EMBASSY CAN DETERMINE, THIS OPTION CALLS FOR A DIFFERENT IMPORT REGIME FOR EACH OF SEVERAL MEAT COMMODITIES.

REPORTEDLY THE PAPER VAGUELY DESCRIBES THE TYPES OF REGIMES PROPOSED.

5. WITH RESPECT TO PORK IMPORTS THE CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDE: A. SUPPLY/DEMAND BASE PERIOD. B. DOMESTIC PRODUCTION OUTLOOK. C. PRICE OUTLOOK. D. IMPACT OF IMPORTS ON FEDERAL STABILIZATION PAYMENTS. E. TRIGGER MECHANISMS TO PLACE IMPORT QUOTAS IN EFFECT WHEN IT APPEARS IMPORTS WILL RESULT IN HIGHER STABILIZATION PAYMENTS THAN HAD BEEN EXPECTED, I.E., IMPORT CONTROLS TO PROTECT FEDERAL TREASURY. EMBASSY WILL ENDEAVOR TO LEARN MORE DETAILS.

6. COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT IT&C AND CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS WILL OPPOSE MULTI-COMMODITY PROGRAM. THE CANADIAN CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION, WHICH HAS BEEN MAJOR ADVOCATE OF A BEEF IMPORT LAW, CAN BE EXPECTED TO VIEW THE INCLUSION OF OTHER MEATS AS WEAKENING THE PROSPECTS OF A BEEF IMPORT LAW. (DRAFT BEEF IMPORT LAW INTRODUCED IN SENATE SOME TIME AGO, REF B, APPEARS DEAD). A/C'S PROPOSAL COULD BE CONSTRUED AS AN ATTEMPT TO PULL CATTLE, AS ONLY UNREGULATED MAJOR MEAT COMMODITY, INTO SUPPLY/MANAGEMENT MARKETING BOARD ARRANGEMENTS. TURKEYS ARE ALREADY COVERED BY PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL AGENCIES AND PORK AND CHICKEN ARE ALREADY COVERED BY PROVINCIAL AGENCIES, SEVERAL OF WHICH WISH A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF NATIONAL SUPPLY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND MARKETING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AGENCIES.

7. THERE ARE NUMEROUS PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL STABILIZATION PROGRAMS WHICH, WHILE DISSIMILAR, EXPOSE PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL TREASURIES TO INCALCULABLE OUTLAYS IN TIMES OF DECLINING FARM PRICES OR RETURNS. AT LEAST ONE PROMINENT UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIST HAS ATTEMPTED TO CALCULATE THE COSTS FOR BEEF AND PORK. EMBASSY OBTAINING COPIES FOR REFERENCE.

8. WHATEVER THE MOTIVE, A/C PAPER IS EVIDENCE OF CONTINUING INTEREST WITHIN GOC IN FURTHER GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN MEAT TRADE -- TO WHICH MUST BE ADDED BUREAUCRATIC RIVALRY BETWEEN A/C AND IT&C AS WELL AS MIXED OBJECTIVES AMONG PROVINCES. AS OF NOW, ADOPTION OF MEAT TRADE LEGISLATION DOES NOT APPEAR LIKELY SOON. ENDERS

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